

# The Nutritious Nibble



## In This Issue:

Are you concerned with climate change but wonder if your actions matter?  
Want to improve your health?

## Nourish Your Body and Nurture the Planet



March is National Nutrition Month. This year, we're focusing on how the food we eat impacts our planet with a focus on earth-friendly, sustainable eats. Sustainable eating includes consuming food that is healthy for the body and the environment. Agriculture accounts for up to 30 percent of greenhouse gases (GHG) associated with human activities. About 14.5 percent of this is attributed to the production of animals for food. Beef is the food with the largest impact on the environment in terms of GHG and environmental impact. Plant sources of protein, such as beans and lentils, are said to be about 34 times less carbon intensive than beef.

In the United States, food is the single largest component of our everyday trash, much of which ends up in landfills, and landfills are one of the largest sources of methane in the U.S.

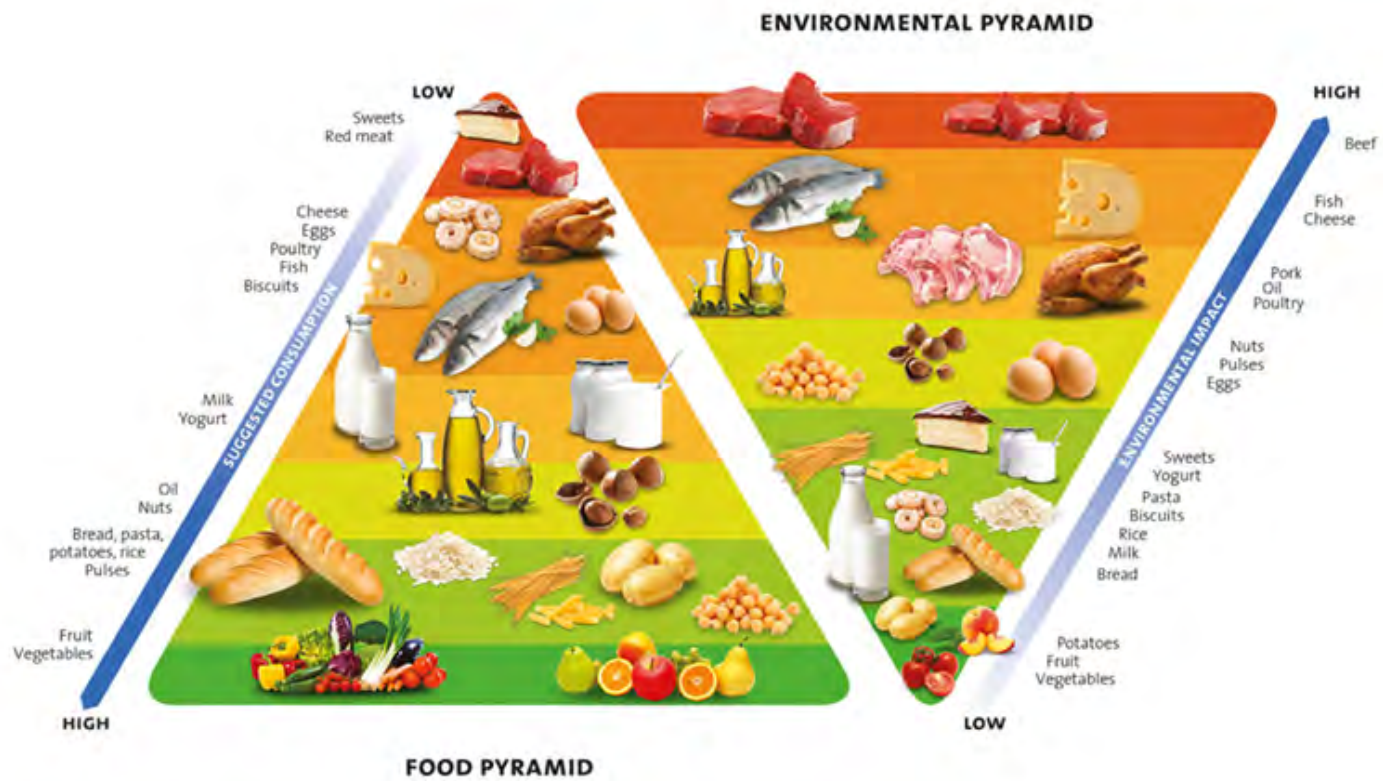
Wasted food is another area with significant effects on our planet. As much as 30-40 percent of food is wasted in America, with much of that coming from our own refrigerators. In the United States, food is the single largest component of our everyday trash, much of which ends up in landfills, and landfills are one of the largest sources of methane in the U.S.

A plant-based or plant-forward eating style benefits your health tremendously. Plant foods such as whole grains, vegetables, fruits and pulses (beans and lentils) provide us with the protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals our body needs. They support a healthy microbiome. Additionally, plant foods provide phytonutrients (phytochemicals), such as phenols, carotenoids and flavonoids. There are thousands of these, way too many to try to name, remember or keep track of individually. Luckily, nature has made it easy on us. By focusing on eating plant foods of different colors, we can assure that we get a healthy array of phytonutrients that will build our immune system, fight inflammation and provide the internal environment we need to remain healthy.



You don't need to eliminate meat and dairy from your diet to help the planet. Just reducing the amount you eat with smaller amounts on your plate or some meatless meals will have great impact.

The [Barrilla Center for Food and Nutrition](#) has developed an Environmental Pyramid. It shows a food pyramid based on the Mediterranean Diet and compares it to the effect of foods on the environment. Plant-based foods form the base of the food pyramid and are the foods with the lowest cost to the environment as shown in [the Environmental Pyramid](#) .



How we can make a positive impact on our future. Here are food-related shifts that benefit the environment and your health.

#### Shift toward a greener diet:

- Eat more plants – especially whole grains, legumes and vegetables. Include an array of colorful vegetables at every meal. Substitute them for refined grains, processed foods and sugar.
- Challenge yourself to try new foods, different ingredients and new recipes.
- Show some love to that ugly vegetable. Imperfect produce is often rejected by consumers.
- Eat less meat and dairy to reduce your personal carbon footprint. Meatless Monday is a good place to start. Try a meatless dish at Commons, your home or favorite restaurant.
- Buy locally – locate a farmers market near you and enjoy produce that is fresher, better tasting and has more nutrients than store-bought produce that has traveled across the country.
- Reduce packaging – reduce the amount of plastic, paper, metal and energy that goes into packaging.
- Bring your own bags to the grocery. Reduce plastic waste.
- Decrease garbage – buy only what you need, make use of leftovers, compost your food waste and reduce the carbon emissions from landfills.



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